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Governor Christie and First Lady Mary Pat Christie Kick Off Christie Administration "Season of Service" By Volunteering at Ladle of Love

Wednesday, November 23, 2011 • Tags: [Other](#)

8-Year Old Burlington City Student Honored for his Inspiring Commitment to Serve the Homeless and People in Need

Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie and First Lady Mary Pat Christie kicked off a "Season of Service" today at the Ladle of Love food pantry in Burlington City by honoring the volunteerism of 8-year old Aidan McManus. The Administration-wide "Season of Service" initiative builds on the same commitment to community the Governor emphasized in his 2010 inaugural address with members of the cabinet volunteering their time over the next month. Today, nearly 1.5 million New Jerseyans are positively influencing communities across the state by volunteering their service through local groups, houses of worship and civic organizations.

A "Season of Service" was inspired by Aidan's compassion and desire to help others. Since the age of five, Aidan has devoted his time and resourcefully hard-earned money to feed the homeless and those in need in Burlington County. Through writing, illustrating and selling comic books, organizing movie nights and giving speeches on how to make a difference, he has successfully raised nearly \$1,000 to donate to his local food pantry, Ladle of Love. For his commitment to improve the lives of others, Governor Christie and First Lady Mary Pat Christie today named Aidan the eighth New Jersey Hero.

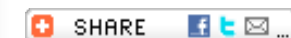
"Aidan's story is an inspiration to each of us," said Governor Christie. "His work demonstrates that no matter who you are, anyone and everyone has the power to make a difference through community service. Because of the

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determination of this young man, my Cabinet has begun a month-long 'Season of Service' to give back to the greater New Jersey community by volunteering their time and assistance in a variety of ways."

On Monday, Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno visited The Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties for the Holiday Hunger Challenge where she joined volunteers in serving meals. Health Commissioner Mary O'Dowd and Human Services Commissioner Jennifer Velez met with patrons at Elijah's Promise in New Brunswick and Agriculture Secretary Doug Fisher served turkey lunch at New Visions Shelter in Camden. On Tuesday, the Lt. Governor continued to give back by helping serve meals at Oasis - A Haven for Women and Children in Paterson.

Mrs. Christie added, "All of us were so moved by Aidan's commitment to help others, that we wanted to get involved. New Jersey Heroes was able to collect more than 5200 pieces of food products from New Jersey companies to distribute to several food pantries in need, including Ladle of Love. In this season of giving, Aidan McManus truly represents our Jersey Pride and we are honored to make him a New Jersey Hero."

A student at St. Mary's Doane Academy, Aidan McManus was just five years old when he began to help those in need. He started by writing, illustrating and selling comic books for 25 cents and donating all his proceeds, \$55.00, to his local soup kitchen. In first grade, he continued his comic book venture and along with money from chores and donating his own birthday money, gave a check to the soup kitchen for approximately \$212.00. In second grade, he expanded his activities with movie nights, and even some speechmaking, where he received a generous donation from a church group, raising \$546.00.

After presenting Aidan with his New Jersey Hero award, the Governor, Mrs. Christie and three of their children - Andrew, Sarah, and Bridget - helped serve Thanksgiving meals to patrons at the Ladle of Love food kitchen.

Additionally, in honor of Aidan, the New Jersey Heroes Foundation delivered food product donations on Wednesday to Catholic Charities in Delanco, Ladle of Love in Burlington, the Plainsboro Township Food Pantry and the Foodbank Network of Somerset County in Bridgewater. Another donation was made to fellow New Jersey Hero Jerry Walker's Team Walker Foundation in Jersey City. A number of New Jersey companies are donating food and toiletries including:

- Kraft Foods: Ritz Bits, Oreo Cookies, Planters, Trident
- Redco Foods: Salada Green Tea and Red Rose Tea
- Post: Pebbles Boulders Cereal
- Campbell's: Chunky Soup Healthy Request
- Pinnacle Foods: Duncan Hines Cake Mix and Icing, Armour Chili, and Mrs. Butterworth's Syrup
- Nestle: Gerber Graduates Yogurt Melts and Gerber Fruit/Veggie snacks
- Bayer Healthcare: Flintstones Children's Vitamins, One A Day Men's and Women's Vitamins
- Merck: Coppertone Sport Suntan Lotion
- Chef La La: All Natural Mexican Red Sauce
- Domino Sugar: Sugar

- Unilever: Coupons for Free Soap, Shampoo, and Conditioner

New Jersey Heroes is an initiative of First Lady Mary Pat Christie that showcases the positive ways people and organizations are impacting New Jersey in their own unique ways. To nominate a hero, go to <http://newjerseyheroes.org> and follow the application instructions and submit the person you believe is a true New Jersey Hero.

Through the Governor's Office of Volunteerism, New Jerseyans can find volunteer opportunities as well as recognize individuals and groups that enhance New Jersey's communities through service by visiting volunteerism.nj.gov.

To find ways to donate time or contributions to New Jersey food banks, please visit www.endhungernj.org.

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